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Happiness from What We Have and What We Experience: Attribute Non-alignability Increases Anticipated Satisfaction from Experiential Purchases

Minhee Kim*
Hee-Kyung Ahn**

This research examines how processing type and alignability moderate the effect of product type on satisfaction (i.e., happiness). It is well known that there are two types of processing—deliberative and intuitive processing. Based on the previous literature that the intuitive processing is compatible with experiential purchases and the deliberative processing is fit with material purchase, the current research demonstrates that processing type moderates the effect of product type on happiness. Moreover, we hypothesize that alignability moderates the effect of product type on anticipated satisfaction. As expected, participants in the intuitive processing condition reported greater happiness from their experiential purchases than material purchases. However, in the deliberative processing condition, there was no significant difference between happiness levels from material and experiential purchases. Furthermore, when the attributes of choice options were presented in a non-alignable manner, participants reported greater anticipated satisfaction from experiential purchases than from material purchases. However, this difference disappeared when attributes were presented in an alignable manner. Finally, we propose ‘choice process’ satisfaction as a potential mediator of the moderating effect of processing type on the relationship between product type and (anticipated) satisfaction.

Keywords: material purchase, experiential purchase, deliberative processing, intuitive processing, alignability, choice process satisfaction, happiness

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Consumers buy various types of products, and the types of products can be defined in many ways. One way to define product types can be based on the distinction between material and experiential products. Consumers can easily compare different material products, which are tangible. Conversely, experiential products are intangible and difficult to be compared among alternatives (Carter and Gilovich 2010). Because of these innate characteristics, purchasing a tumbler (i.e., material purchase) is different from buying a movie ticket (i.e., experiential purchase). Although both purchases could render a consumer happy, a specific product type may be compatible with a specific processing type (i.e., deliberative or intuitive) (Gallo et al. 2017).

It has long been debated as to whether deliberation or intuition would lead to greater satisfaction from consumers' choices and judgments. Researchers on the deliberative side of the argument have claimed that consumers generally deliberate and compare alternatives when they make a decision (Langer 1989; Rottenstreich, Sood, and Brenner 2007; Simonson 2005). Moreover, people tend to be dissatisfied with purchases made without deliberation (Rook 1987; Rook and Hoch 1985). This represents a traditional view of consumer decision making. Recent research, however, has shed light on the intuitive side of the argument, such that humans, limited with their cognitive capacity, would be more satisfied when they do not deliberate. Several studies have substantiated

this view (Brenner, Rottenstreich, and Sood 1999; Dijksterhuis and Van Olden 2006; Wilson et al. 1993). One of the attempts to reconcile these seemingly opposite views in the previous research was to incorporate product type with processing type (Gallo et al. 2017).

Extending the previous work (Gallo et al. 2017), we investigate that consumers are more satisfied with their purchases when they deliberately choose material products than experiential products. By contrast, we demonstrate that consumers feel happier when they intuitively choose experiential products than material products (see Gallo et al. 2017). Whereas marketers can manage the types of products that they provide, it is difficult for them to control a consumer's mental process. That is, investigating the moderating effect of processing type on the relationship between product type and satisfaction alone may not be sufficient to suggest meaningful managerial implications for marketers. Thus, we propose the moderating role of alignability on the relationship between product type and anticipated satisfaction. Alignability can be defined as a way how attributes of products are presented to consumers. This alignability concept is quite useful for marketers to execute marketing tactics in the real world. Alignable attributes are common attributes among options, and consumers can directly and easily compare choice options having alignable attributes. Non-alignable attributes are unique for one option. As a result, it is

difficult for consumers to compare alternatives having non-alignable attributes (Sun, Keh, and Lee 2012; Zhang and Fitzsimons 1999; Zhang and Markman 1998). We expect that alignable attributes may be fit with material products since alignable attributes can be compared easily among options. On the other hand, experiential products, by their nature, may have more non-alignable attributes.

Finally, we propose choice process satisfaction as a potential mediator. Although Gallo et al. (2017) uncovered the relationship between processing type and product type, they did not explain the exact mechanism why material products have better fit with deliberation and experiential products are associated with intuition. We investigate whether choice process satisfaction mediates the moderating effect of processing type on the relationship between product type and (anticipated) satisfaction. We expect that people experience greater choice process satisfaction when they choose material products deliberatively and experiential products intuitively, and thus, consumers are more satisfied with their chosen option.

I. Theoretical Background

1.1 Happiness from Material and Experiential Products

There are many criteria that can be used to

categorize what people purchase and consume. Various types of products can be defined based on consumers' goals, intentions, and many other characteristics: hedonic or utilitarian goods (Dhar and Wertenbroch 2000), luxury or necessity products (Kivetz and Simonson 2002), and affect-rich or affect-poor options (Rottenstreich and Hsee 2001). In pursuit of happiness, the distinction between material and experiential purchases is quite useful. This distinction is based on consumers' intentions when investing in their happiness (Van Boven and Gilovich 2003). Material purchases refer to "those made with the primary intention of acquiring a material good: a tangible object that is kept in one's possession" (Van Boven and Gilovich 2003). Such products include laptops, tumblers, desks, and chairs. Experiential purchases refer to "those made with the primary intention of acquiring a life experience: an event or series of events that one lives through" (Van Boven and Gilovich 2003). Experiential products are not tangible and associated with events (Nicolao, Irwin, and Goodman 2009). Examples include movies, trips, camping, and concerts.

According to Van Boven and Gilovich (2003), people derive more enjoyment from experiential purchases than from material purchases. When participants were asked to describe either the most recent experiential purchase or the most recent material purchase, they indicated that the recent experiential purchase made them happier than the recent material purchase.

Previous studies have explained reasons why people feel happier from experiential purchases than material purchases. First, comparability among alternatives can be a reason. Material products are easy to be compared feature-by-feature, whereas experiential products are difficult to be compared. The ease with comparisons among possessions makes people simply unhappy (Carter and Gilovich 2010).

Second, material products are interchangeable with other material substitutes and thus, consumers can easily think of other options even after their choice. Once consumers think of substitutes of their choice, those who purchase material products are more likely to feel dissatisfied (Rosenzweig and Gilovich 2012). On the other hand, experiential products are unique and hardly interchangeable one another. Thus, consumers rarely think of other experiential substitutes. As a result, consumers feel happier from their own experiential purchases than from material purchases (Rosenzweig and Gilovich 2012).

Finally, experiential products can be shared with others (Kumar and Gilovich 2015). People talk about their unique experiences with others and these shared experiences make people happy. However, this happiness from communicating with other individuals is limited to experiential purchases since material products may not have many vivid stories to talk about compared to experiential products (Kumar and Gilovich 2015). Due to these innate characteristics of

experiences and possessions, many researchers argue that experiences bring consumers greater happiness than possessions do.

Despite the evidence of greater happiness resulting from experiential over material purchases, several other researchers have investigated boundary conditions of the effect of purchase type on happiness. For instance, social class with the different levels of resources has been examined as a critical moderator (Lee, Hall, and Wood 2018). Lower-class participants with limited resources were happier from material purchases (or were equally happy from experiential and material purchases) whereas, higher-class participants with abundant resources were happier from experiential purchases than material purchases (Lee, Hall, and Wood 2018). Further, financial constraints shift consumers' preferences toward material products (rather than experiential products), which is due to an increased concern about the longevity of the purchase (Tully, Hershfield, and Meyvis 2015).

The premise of the current research is that not only product type but also processing type can affect consumer satisfaction. The next section explains the two types of processing and their effects on happiness.

1.2 Two Types of Processing (Deliberative Versus Intuitive) and Consumer Satisfaction

Even though previous researchers have used

different terminology in terms of mental processes of humans, researchers all have agreed that there are two types of processing: deliberative and intuitive processing. When people deliberate, they think deeply and exert significant cognitive capacity. This process is called System 2 (Kahneman 2003). System 2 is a slow and effortful process that is deliberately controlled (Kahneman 2003). Epstein (1994) called this deliberative process as a rational system. It is an analytic, logical system based on reasoning and is actively and consciously experienced (Epstein 1994). Other researchers have coined the term a 'cool' system (Metcalfe and Mischel 1999). All these researchers were essentially making the same argument that the deliberative process makes individuals think deeply.

Conversely, the intuitive process is automatic and requires little cognitive capacity (Kahneman 2003). When people do not deliberate, they follow their intuition. Therefore, no reason is needed. Kahneman (2003) called this process System 1. Other researchers have termed it an experiential system (Epstein 1994), and a 'hot' system (Metcalfe and Mischel 1999). Unlike the deliberative process, the intuitive process is fast, automatic, and effortless (Kahneman 2003; Stanovich and West 2000). It is also holistic, rapid and affective (Epstein 1994). Furthermore, the intuitive process is preconscious (Smith and DeCoster 2000) and simple (Metcalfe and Mischel 1999). This aforementioned research has demonstrated that humans have two types

of mental process.

Although people use two types of mental process in decision making, a lot of previous research has assumed that humans generally deliberate and compare alternatives when they make a decision (Rottenstreich, Sood, and Brenner 2007; Simonson 2005). According to the utility theory, individuals should maximize their utility by attaining the best outcome through comparisons (Von Neumann and Morgenstern 1944). In accordance with this normative perspective of the utility theory, the previous research on decision making has demonstrated that consumers actively use their conscious thoughts and compare alternatives to achieve the best outcome (Huber, Payne, and Puto 1982; Kivetz and Simonson 2003; Simonson 2005).

Research on the deliberative side of the argument has demonstrated the benefits of deliberation. For example, when consumers made a decision relying on System 1 with little cognitive effort, they were likely to be fascinated by an unhealthy option (e.g., chocolate cake). However, when consumers relied on System 2 with plentiful cognitive resources, they were likely to choose a healthy option (e.g., fruit salad) (Rottenstreich, Sood, and Brenner 2007). Furthermore, when people are in a mindfulness (i.e. deliberative process) state, they actively think and use information. Thus, individuals can achieve a better outcome with mindfulness. However, mindlessness (i.e. intuitive process) is a state where individuals rarely think and

use little information. This mindlessness state leads people to achieve a less desirable outcome (Langer 1989).

Conversely, some other studies have focused on the benefits of unconsciousness or intuition. Consumers often feel difficulty in verbalizing why they made the specific choice. When consumers reflected on their decisions while concocting a reason for choosing a particular option, they were generally less satisfied (Wilson et al. 1993). Similarly, consumers who had chosen a poster without deliberation were more satisfied with the poster (Dijksterhuis and Van Olden 2006) than those who with much deliberation. In a similar vein, other research has shown the disadvantages of the deliberative process. For example, excessive comparison led consumers to focus on inferior attributes of the alternatives (Brenner, Rottenstreich, and Sood 1999). Focusing on the inferior attributes made compared alternatives less attractive, which in turn made those alternatives less preferred.

Based on the mixed findings regarding the advantages and disadvantages of different mental processes, other researchers have tried to integrate two types of processing for a better understanding of consumer decision making. When people make a complex decision, individuals use both consciousness and unconsciousness to achieve a better outcome (Nordgren, Bos, and Dijksterhuis 2011). Conscious thoughts lead people to follow the rules and unconscious thoughts lead people to aggregate all the

information without much attention (Dijksterhuis and Nordgren 2006; Nordgren, Bos, and Dijksterhuis 2011). Both precise rules and information aggregation are important in making a complex decision (Nordgren, Bos, and Dijksterhuis 2011).

Although much research has shown the benefits of the deliberative process and the intuitive process, the aforementioned findings may not be sufficient to understand when and how a specific mental processing can play a critical role on consumer satisfaction. The idea behind this research is that incorporating the types of processing with the product type may exert an effect on consumer satisfaction. Specifically, we expect that when a specific processing type is compatible (incompatible) with a specific product type, consumers are happy (less happy) from their purchases. The next section explains how processing type and product type can interplay with each other and affect consumer satisfaction.

1.3 Interaction between Product Type and Processing Type on Happiness

Much deliberation enables people to compare and evaluate alternatives thoroughly. Material products are tangible and easy to be compared one another (Carter and Gilovich 2010). The ease of comparisons among material products is likely to encourage the deliberative processing (Inbar, Cone, and Gilovich 2010). Consumers

are accustomed to comparing material products with deliberation. Thus, material purchases based on such sufficient comparisons and evaluations may lead people to be happy.

However, experiential products are intangible and difficult to be compared among alternatives by their nature (Carter and Gilovich 2010). This difficulty of comparisons among experiential products is likely to facilitate the intuitive, holistic processing (Inbar, Cone, and Gilovich 2010). Consumers are used to choosing experiential products with intuition, which in turn, makes people happy. Therefore, when people make a decision with deliberation, they are happier from material purchases than from experiential purchases. However, when making a decision with intuition, they feel happier from experiential purchases than from material purchases.

Based on the research conducted by Gallo et al. (2017), the present research examines whether processing type can moderate the effect of product type on satisfaction. Although Gallo et al. (2017) demonstrated that the deliberative processing is compatible with material purchases, whereas the intuitive processing is compatible with experiential purchases, they did not directly measure consumer happiness (satisfaction). In this research, we directly measure happiness of consumers who purchase different types of products using different processing types.

H1: When making a decision with deliberation, people will be happier from material

purchases than from experiential purchases. However, when making a decision with intuition, they will be happier from experiential purchases than from material purchases.

1.4 Interaction between Product Type and Alignability on Satisfaction

Although it is important for marketing practitioners to examine the relationship between product type and processing type on consumer happiness, it is not easy for them to control a consumer's mental process. That is, examining the moderating effect of processing type on the relationship between product type and satisfaction may not be sufficient to suggest meaningful practical implications for marketers. The concept of alignability is considered as a novel moderator qualifying the effect of product type on satisfaction in the current research.

Alignability is the factor that determines how the attributes of options are presented to consumers. Alignable attributes are "common to both options", whereas non-alignable attributes are "unique to one option and absent in the other" (Sun, Keh, and Lee 2012; Zhang and Fitzsimons 1999; Zhang and Markman 1998). Marketers generally present attributes of products and brands in an alignable manner in various marketing settings. Under this circumstance, consumers can easily compare alternatives. The ease of comparisons among options having

alignable attributes leads individuals to feel satisfied with their choices regardless of product types.

Conversely, alternatives with non-alignable attributes are difficult to be compared (Sun, Keh, and Lee 2012; Zhang and Fitzsimons 1999; Zhang and Markman 1998). As we mentioned earlier, experiential products, by their nature, are intangible and hard to be compared (Carter and Gilovich 2010). Moreover, experiential products are unique and less interchangeable (Rosenzweig and Gilovich 2012), which in turn may have more non-alignable attributes. Since consumers already acknowledge these innate characteristics of experiential purchases, consumers tend to choose experiential products which can meet their minimum standard by using the satisficing strategy (Carter and Gilovich 2010). In other words, consumers are already accustomed to choosing experiential products with the satisficing strategy, and thus, the non-alignable presentation of attributes may not have negative impact on consumer satisfaction from experiential purchases.

Unlike experiential products, material products are tangible and easy to be compared (Carter and Gilovich 2010). Due to these characteristics of material products, people want to maximize utility by attaining the best choice outcome when they choose material products (Carter and Gilovich 2010). As a result, consumers search more information and tend to engage in product comparison. However, when consumers

confront the situation where the attributes of material products are presented in a non-alignable manner, they may not easily compare alternatives. Under this circumstance, people may have difficulty in maximizing. Thus, material purchases presented in the non-alignable format may have negative impact on choice satisfaction.

H2: When attributes of choice alternatives are presented in a non-alignable manner, people will have greater anticipated satisfaction from experiential purchases than from material purchases. However, when attributes of choice alternatives are presented in an alignable manner, this difference will disappear.

1.5 The Mediating Role of Choice Process Satisfaction

This research aims to examine why consumers feel happier from material purchases than from experiential purchases when choosing with deliberation, and happier from experiential purchases than from material purchases when choosing with intuition. To explain the reason behind, we focus on 'consumer choice process' and propose 'choice process satisfaction' as a potential mediator. Not only is the product outcome crucial to consumers, but the choice process is also important (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Mano and Oliver 1993). Choice process satisfaction is decision makers' satisfaction

with the decision process itself rather than the choice outcome (Zhang and Fitzsimons 1999). It is important to know whether consumers are satisfied with their choice process, because the negative choice process could generate negative feeling as a byproduct of the decisions (Zhang and Fitzsimons 1999).

Overall, people who want to maximize their utility search more information and tend to engage in comparison (Schwartz et al. 2002). Material products are tangible and easy to be compared one another. Comparisons among material products are likely to stimulate the deliberative processing (Inbar, Cone, and Gilovich 2010). Much deliberation enables people to use the maximizing strategy (i.e., maximizing process) when people purchase material products (Carter and Gilovich 2010). Therefore, when people choose material products deliberately using the maximizing strategy (i.e., maximizing process), they may feel greater choice process satisfaction.

In choosing experiential products, however, consumers hardly maximize their utility by attaining the best outcome since they may have difficulty in comparing intangible experiential products (Carter and Gilovich 2010). That is, choosing experiential products may be more compatible with the satisficing strategy (satisficing process) (Carter and Gilovich 2010), which in turn requires relatively little deliberation. Little need of deliberation can naturally facilitate the intuitive, holistic processing (Inbar, Cone, and

Gilovich 2010). Therefore, when consumers buy experiential products with intuition adopting the satisficing strategy, they may be satisfied with the choice process. In sum, we predict that individuals may have greater choice process satisfaction when they choose material products deliberately and experiential products intuitively. As a result, they are more satisfied with their chosen option.

H3: Choice process satisfaction will mediate the moderating effect of processing type on the relationship between product type and anticipated satisfaction.

II. Study 1

This study examines the moderating role of processing type on the relationship between product type and happiness. In other words, it examines whether consumers in the deliberative (intuitive) processing condition feel happier after choosing a material (experiential) product than after choosing an experiential (material) product.

2.1 Method and Procedure

A total of two hundred and forty participants were recruited from Prolific (92 female, $M_{\text{age}} = 27.46$, $SD = 4.37$). Participants were asked to

describe either the most recent material purchase or the most recent experiential purchase they had made for more than \$100. As a part of instruction, the definition of either material purchases (i.e., spending money with the primary intention of acquiring a material possession) or experiential purchases (i.e., spending money with the primary intention of acquiring a life experience) was given (Van Boven and Gilovich 2003). In addition, we asked participants to describe their recent purchase based on either deliberation or intuition (Nordgren and Dijksterhuis 2009). A 2 (product type: material vs. experiential) x 2 (processing type: deliberative vs. intuitive) between-subjects design was used. For the material purchases with the deliberative processing, we asked participants the following:

Please describe the most recent material purchase you made more than \$100 with deliberation. This means you made the purchase based on hard thinking and reasons.

For the experiential purchases with the intuitive processing, we asked the following:

Please describe the most recent experiential purchase you made more than \$100 without deliberation. This means you made the purchase based on a gut feeling and first impression.

Next, participants then indicated how happy their purchase made them. They were asked,

“When you think about this purchase, how happy does it make you?” which they answered on a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (not happy) to 5 (moderately happy) to 9 (extremely happy). Participants then reported brief demographic information.

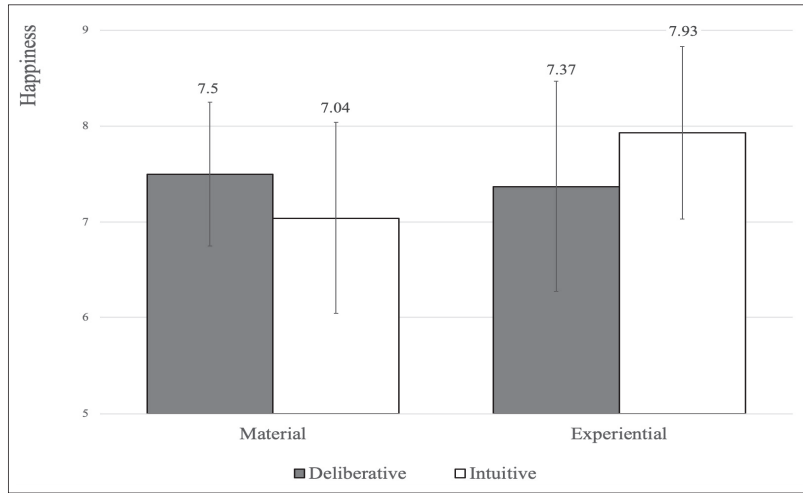
2.2 Results

Among two hundred forty participants, twenty-eight participants those who did not properly finish the recall task (e.g., “I have never in my life made a gut decision to buy one single item”) were excluded from the analysis. Thus, two hundred and twelve participants were included in the analysis. As expected, there was a significant interaction between product type and processing type ($F(1, 208) = 3.77, p = .05$; see Figure 1). Specifically, the respondents in the intuitive processing condition reported feeling much happier from an experiential purchase than from a material purchase ($M_{\text{material}} = 7.04$ vs. $M_{\text{experiential}} = 7.93$; $t(96) = 2.27, p < .05$). Unlike previous studies, however, in the deliberative processing condition, participants’ happiness from two product types was not significantly different ($M_{\text{material}} = 7.5$ vs. $M_{\text{experiential}} = 7.37$; $t(92) = -.36, p > 1$).

2.3 Discussion

Study 1 confirmed the interaction between

<Figure 1> Happiness as a Function of Processing Type and Product Type (Study 1)



product type and processing type on happiness (see Gallo et al. 2017). When consumers followed their intuition, they were happier from an experiential purchase than from a material purchase. However, when people deliberated, there was no difference between product types in terms of happiness. This no difference in the deliberative processing condition was unexpected. It might be possible that when consumers were asked to describe the most recent purchase based on deliberation, consumers might think that they had already made the best choice due to the previous deliberation regardless of product type.

III. Study 2

In Study 2, we test whether the effect of

product type on anticipated satisfaction can be moderated by alignability (two-way interaction between product type and alignability on anticipated satisfaction). In addition, we test whether choice process satisfaction mediate the moderating effect of processing type on the relationship between product type and anticipated satisfaction. A 2 (product type: material vs. experiential) x 2 (processing type: deliberative vs. intuitive) x 2 (alignability: alignable vs. non-alignable) between-subjects design was used, and choice process satisfaction as a potential mediator was measured.

3.1 Method and Procedure

A total of three hundred twenty participants were recruited from Prolific (176 female, $M_{age} = 30.21$, $SD = 5.82$). First, participants were asked to perform a choice task with a specific

instruction. In the deliberative processing condition, the instruction stated, *“You should base your evaluations on analytical assessments. Ignore your feelings and first impressions. In doing so, we’d like you to think about these purchases carefully, take your time, and analyze the reasons for giving them specific values. Don’t just go with initial judgments or gut feelings”* (Gallo et al. 2017). Conversely, in the intuitive processing condition, the instruction stated, *“Rely on your overall impression and feelings. Avoid analytical assessments. In doing so, we’d like you to make simple snap judgments and just go with your immediate gut feelings regarding the value of these purchases. Don’t take any time to think them over or analyze”* (Gallo et al. 2017).

Participants in the material condition were asked to choose between the two options of skincare product (i.e., material products), and participants in the experiential condition were asked to choose between the two options of facial massage. The skincare product and the facial massage used in this study share the same purpose of improving skin condition. However, these products are different in terms of consumers intentions when investing in their happiness (i.e., material and experiential purchases).

Alignability was manipulated as a display format of two options. In the alignable condition, two attributes of each product type were shown to participants (i.e., material condition:

benefit and texture, experiential condition: benefit and opening hours). These attributes were displayed in a table so that participants could easily compare them. In the non-alignable condition, all the attributes were different; thus, participants in the non-alignable condition were not able to compare the levels of attributes directly (see Appendix).

After the choice task, participants indicated their anticipated satisfaction on a 7-point scale. They were asked, “How satisfied are you likely to be with the chosen option?” (1 = “very dissatisfied,” and 7 = “very satisfied”) (Shiv and Huber 2000). Regarding the measures of choice process satisfaction, we used the questionnaire in Zhang and Fitzsimons (1999). Participants were asked to answer a total of six questions using a 10-point scale (1 = “strongly agree,” and 10 = “strongly disagree”). These items were as follows: 1) I find the process of deciding which option to buy frustrating; 2) Several good options were available for me to choose between; 3) How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your experience of deciding which option to choose? (1 = “extremely satisfied”, and 10 = “extremely dissatisfied”); 4) I think the choice selection was good; 5) I would be happy to choose from the same set of options on my next purchase occasion; and 6) I find the process of deciding which option to buy interesting. Finally, participants provided demographic information.

3.2 Results and Discussion

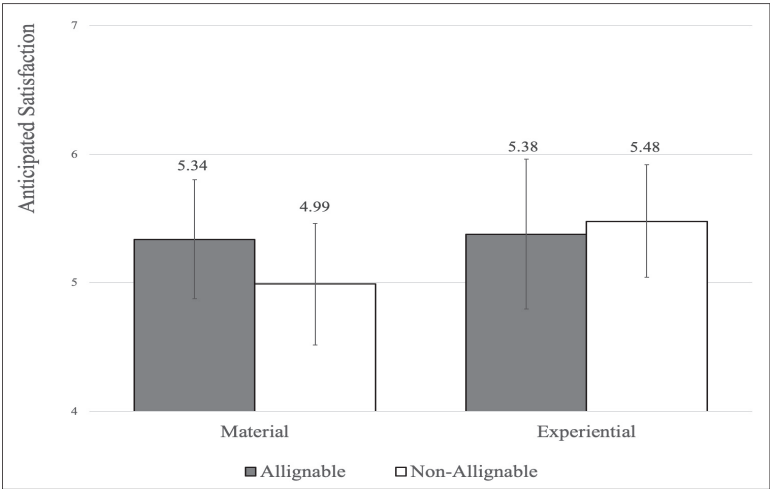
As a manipulation check for the product type, forty-three participants were recruited from Prolific (21 female, $M_{age} = 26.98$, $SD = 4.81$) as an independent sample. First, they were randomly assigned to the material or experiential condition. They were then asked to read the definition of material and experiential products and rate the extent to which the skincare product (or facial massage) was material (or experiential) on a 9-point scale (1 = “purely material”, 9 = “purely experiential”). The respondents rated the skincare product as more material and the facial massage as more experiential ($M_{skincare} = 3.29$ vs. $M_{massage} = 7.36$; $t(41) = 7.25$, $p < .001$): therefore, the product type was successfully manipulated.

To examine the manipulation of processing type, a t -test was conducted. Participants in

the deliberative processing condition spent more time on the survey than participants in the intuitive processing condition ($M_{deliberative} = 249.78$ seconds vs. $M_{intuitive} = 181.22$ seconds; $t(188) = -2.65$, $p < .01$). This meant that respondents in the deliberative processing condition thought deliberately and spent more time choosing between the two options.

First, the two-way interaction between product type and alignability was tested by conducting an analysis of variance (ANOVA). There was a significant interaction between product type and alignability ($F(1, 316) = 4.24$, $p < .05$; see Figure 2). To determine the specific interaction between these two factors, a t -test was performed. When the attributes were displayed in the non-alignable manner, participants had lower anticipated satisfaction from the material purchase than from the experiential purchase ($M_{material} = 4.99$ vs. $M_{experiential} = 5.48$;

<Figure 2> Anticipated Satisfaction as a Function of Alignability and Product Type (Study 2)



$t(160) = 3.42, p = .001$). However, when the attributes were displayed in the alignable manner, there was no difference between the material and experiential purchase in terms of anticipated satisfaction ($M_{\text{material}} = 5.34$ vs. $M_{\text{experiential}} = 5.38$; $t(149) = .23, p > .1$).

An ANOVA was then conducted to test the three-way interaction among product type, processing type, and alignability. There was no significant three-way interaction ($F(1, 312) = .81, p > .1$). Finally, we tested the mediated moderation using SPSS PROCESS Macro Model 8 (Hayes 2017), and no mediated moderating effect of choice process satisfaction on anticipated satisfaction was found ($\beta = -.1860, SE = .11, 95\%$ bootstrap CI: $-.4144$ to $.0343$). In sum, although there was no significant three-way interaction and mediated moderation, the results of Study 2 demonstrated a significant two-way interaction between product type and alignability (H2), which is a novel finding in the current research.

IV. General Discussion

First, the current research extended the previous work conducted by Gallo et al. (2017). Gallo and colleagues examined that a specific product type is compatible with a specific processing type (i.e., material products and deliberation; experiential products and intuition).

Particularly, they demonstrated that consumers exhibit a higher willingness to pay when they choose material products deliberately and experiential products intuitively. Extending this previous work, we demonstrated that people feel happier from experiential purchases than from material purchases when making a decision with intuition. When people make a decision with deliberation, however, there was no significant difference between happiness levels from material and experiential purchases. To facilitate a specific mental processing, marketers can use differentiated advertising copies depending on the product type. For example, marketers are better off stimulating consumers' intuitive mental processing or impulse purchases when a company wants to promote experiential products (e.g., flight tickets). In contrast, facilitating individuals' deliberative processing may be more effective when a company wants to advertise material products (e.g., laptop).

Second, the concept of alignability has proved to be useful in understanding the effects of product type on consumer happiness. As we hypothesized, people indicated greater anticipated satisfaction from experiential purchases than from material purchases when attributes of choice alternatives were presented in a non-alignable manner. However, this difference disappeared when attributes of choice alternatives were presented in an alignable manner. This moderating effect of alignability on the

relationship between product type and anticipated satisfaction provide a meaningful managerial implication. Alignability can play a critical role in presenting product specifications. For example, marketers should be careful when they provide or display attributes of material products in a non-alignable manner. This non-alignable presentation of material products can produce adverse effects such as choice deferral and discouraging consumers' motivation to process information.

There are several limitations of the current research, which should be addressed in future research. First, we failed to show a three-way interaction among product type, processing type, and alignability. One concern is that whether the stimuli we used can successfully manipulate our main factors. In the future research, we can test this qualified effect by adopting different stimuli. Second, although we proposed choice process satisfaction as a potential mediator, it did not mediate the moderating effect of processing type on the relationship between product type and anticipated satisfaction. Future studies would suggest other meaningful mediators, such as amount of information or ease of comparison. Finally, we investigated the effect of product type on happiness by focusing on the distinction between material and experiential goods. We could further examine our current findings by adopting other types of products such as utilitarian and hedonic goods or luxury and necessity products. By

doing so, we hope to contribute to the existing literature on consumer happiness.

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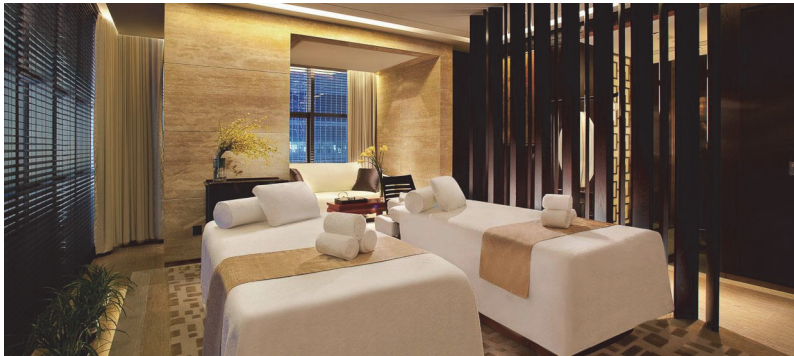
〈Appendix〉 Stimuli Used in Study 2

Alignable condition: Material products (skincare products)



	Option A	Option B
Benefit	Quenching dry skin	Tightening loose skin
Texture	Cream	Serum

Non-alignable condition: Experiential products (facial massages)



Option A	Option B
Equipment: Have up-to-date equipment	Qualification of the staff: Specialist
Opening hours: 10:30 ~ 20:30	Efficiency: Quick check-in